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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 26TH MEETING

Chairman: Mr. KARUKUBIRO-KAMUNANWIRE (Uganda)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.40 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 77: QUESTIONS RELATING TO INFORMATION (continued) (A/SPC/45/L.12, L.13/Rev.2, L.15, L.16, L.34, L.35)

1. Mr. JANOWSKI (Poland) said that, with regard to draft resolution A/SPC/45/L.12, his delegation was currently engaged in negotiations with the Department of Public Information regarding the opening of a United Nations information centre at Warsaw. In consideration of the financial obligations of the Polish Government and the financial situation of the United Nations, his delegation had decided not to ask for any action on the draft resolution at present. They reserved the right, however, to return to the matter at a later date.

2. Mr. ALSAIDI (Yemen) said that his delegation was grateful to the Committee and the Department of Public Information for their support for a United Nations information centre in Yemen. Such a centre would build bridges of peace and understanding in the region. At present, however, they had decided to request that no action should be taken on draft resolution A/SPC/45/L.13/Rev.2. They would discuss the matter at the spring 1991 session of the Committee on Information.

3. The CHAIRMAN said that, in view of the statements by the representatives of Poland and Yemen, no action would be taken on draft resolutions A/SPC/45/L.12 and A/SPC/45/L.13/Rev.2. He had also been informed by the representative of Cuba that his delegation was withdrawing the draft decision contained in A/SPC/45/L.34. It had been proposed that the Committee should take note that a number of countries had requested the Secretary-General, in implementing programme 38 on public information of the proposed medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997, to take into account the need to intensify the dissemination of information on decolonization in the context of the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism.

4. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee agreed to proceed accordingly.

5. It was so decided.

6. The CHAIRMAN said that the Committee had now concluded its consideration of item 77, Questions relating to information. The Rapporteur would present the Committee's report to the General Assembly at the appropriate time.

AGENDA ITEM 75: REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE ISRAELI PRACTICES AFFECTING THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE AND OTHER ARABS OF THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES (continued) (A/45/84, 306, 576)

7. Mr. SUYOI (Brunei Darussalam) said that Israel's repressive policies had been widely publicized in the international media. It also continued to mete out collective punishments such as demolition of houses, curfews and the sealing off of entire areas. A high number of deaths and casualties, which included children, had been sustained during the three years of the uprising (intifadah). In addition to

(Mr. Suyoi, Brunei Darussalam)

the use of force, Palestinian youth had also been deprived of its right to education through frequent school closures, curfews and other interruptions.

8. Despite international condemnation, Israel continued its blatant disregard of its obligation to protect Palestinians in the occupied territories under the fourth Geneva Convention. The incident at the Haram Al-Sharif exemplified Israel's disregard for Palestinian lives. His Government strongly favoured stationing United Nations personnel in the occupied territories to ensure the safety and protection of Palestinian civilians under Israeli occupation. The international community must hold Israel, as the occupying Power, responsible for violence against Palestinians and must urge Israel to accept the de jure applicability of the fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 to all territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem.

9. The precarious human rights conditions of the population of the occupied territories were compounded by Israeli policy of settling immigrants in the occupied territories. Such a policy indicated that Israel was pursuing its goal of a "Greater Israel" and wanted the Palestinians and the international community to accept its annexation of the occupied territories as a fait accompli. But Israel should have learned over the past 23 years that the legitimate and inalienable right of the Palestinian people to a homeland could not be suppressed.

10. Peace and stability in the region could not be achieved while Israel continued to occupy Arab territory and denied the Palestinian people the right of self-determination. His Government supported the convening of an International Peace Conference on the Middle East involving the permanent members of the Security Council and all concerned parties, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, on an equal footing.

11. Mr. FREUDENSCHUSS (Austria) said that his delegation had predicted the current situation of unrest and violence in the occupied territories several years earlier but, unfortunately, its warnings had gone unheeded. Recent events on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, where excessive force had been used by Israeli security forces, had resulted in scores of dead and wounded Palestinians. The reports before the Committee, the General Assembly and the Security Council abounded with evidence and examples of repressive Israeli measures. Existing conditions had led to profound feelings of vulnerability at all times among Palestinians; furthermore, they had no recourse to any authority other than the occupying Power itself. That was, as Meron Benevisti put it, "rule by law and not rule of law". Rule of law would mean the recognition by Israel of the de jure applicability of the fourth Geneva Convention to the occupied territories.

12. Many ideas had been put forward recently on providing better protection to the civilian population in the occupied territories, ranging from measures that could be taken by the parties to the fourth Geneva Convention, an increase in international staff serving with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and the International Committee of the Red Cross, the appointment of an ombudsman, to enlarging the mandate of the United

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(Mr. Freudenschuss, Austria)

Nations Truce Supervision Organization in Palestine or the establishment of another observer mission. Effective implementation of those ideas and proposals would, however, depend to a large extent on Israeli co-operation. The Israeli leadership did not seem to realize that, rather than subduing the Palestinians, they were further fertilizing the existing breeding ground for violence. While Palestinian violence could not be condoned, it was an expression of the anger and frustration of a dispossessed people.

13. Protection must not be seen as a panacea or placebo, however. It could only help to break the vicious cycle of hatred and confrontation, thus contributing to a climate for negotiation. Only through negotiation and a comprehensive political settlement could the causes of the Arab-Israeli conflict and of the question of Palestine be removed.

14. Mr. CHERIF (Tunisia) said that the report of the Special Committee (A/45/576) not only confirmed the tragic situation of the Palestinian people but also indicated the increasing scale of human rights violations by the Israeli authorities in the occupied Arab territories. It thus disproved all Israel's efforts to mislead international public opinion and demonstrated the authorities' failure to dampen the Palestinian people's determination to hold fast to its legitimate national rights, at whatever cost. The report's publication also coincided with a growing recognition on the part of the international community that effective action must be taken to protect the defenceless Arab population of the occupied territories against measures, reported even in the Israeli press, such as the imposition of curfews, bans on freedom of movement, interruption of water, electricity and telephone services, raids on and demolition of homes and confiscation of property, not to speak of acts of violence. The number of unarmed civilians who had been martyred in the course of the valiant uprising was continuing to climb, while thousands of others had been injured.

15. The international community, and the United Nations in particular, could not allow such a tragic situation, which ran counter to international conventions, moral values, the principles of international law and, particularly, the provisions of the fourth Geneva Convention, to continue. The community, and especially signatories of the Convention, must seek appropriate means to ensure that its provisions were respected. The assertion by the Israeli Prime Minister that his party must maintain its hold on the land of Israel from the sea to the Jordan River for future generations and large-scale migration only served to indicate the Israeli Government's expansionist intentions and contempt for United Nations resolutions. Israel, indeed, was prepared to go to any lengths to establish a "Greater Israel" by settling Jews from other countries in place of the original Arab inhabitants and thus altering the demographic structure of the region.

16. His country, like other peace-loving States, shared the hopes and sorrows of the Palestinian people and expressed admiration for its heroic struggle. It fully supported efforts to attain a just and durable solution of the question of Palestine and urged that prompt measures should be taken to convene the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, under the auspices of the United

(Mr. Cherif, Tunisia)

Nations, with the participation of all parties to the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. The international community should also take urgent measures to ensure adequate protection for the Arab population of the occupied territories.

17. Mr. SHEVCHENKO (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) said it was clear from the Special Committee's latest report (A/45/576) that the situation in the occupied territories had worsened by comparison with the previous year. There had been a large number of civilian casualties and an increasing proportion of those casualties had been children. In the most recent incident, at the Al-Aqsa Mosque, 21 persons had been killed and 125 wounded. Moreover, Israel continued to ignore the resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council, including most recently Security Council resolutions 672 (1990) and 673 (1990), and the Secretary-General's recommendations for the stabilization of the situation.

18. It was also a matter of concern that Israel was settling immigrants in the occupied territories in clear violation of international agreements to which it was a signatory.

19. One of the important tasks facing the United Nations was the settlement of the Middle East question. In his delegation's view, a settlement of that problem which would be in the interests of the whole world was now possible and realistic. It was only the inflexibility of the Israeli Government and its refusal to engage in a dialogue with the United Nations that stood in the way. His delegation considered that the Security Council and particularly its permanent members must now take practical steps to convene an International Peace Conference on the Middle East on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). The United Nations had the means and diplomatic instruments needed to achieve a just political solution of the Palestine question and to enable the long-suffering Palestinian people to exercise their inalienable rights, including the right to establish a sovereign Palestinian state.

20. Mr. KHEDIRI (Algeria) said that the Palestinian people had been struggling for decades to establish its own independent State under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization. As the courageous uprising entered its fourth year, Palestinian aspirations to independence were met with ever increasing brutality on the part of the Israeli authorities. It was now more than ever imperative seriously to address the Palestinian's people's concerns, as highlighted by the recent condemnation of Israeli practices in Security Council resolutions 672 (1990) and 673 (1990).

21. Such Israeli practices would end only with a solution of the Middle East problem as a whole. Everyone should be aware that developments had reached a critical stage in the light of Israel's plans to establish new settlements in the occupied Arab territories, and particularly in Jerusalem. Although the international community was convinced of the need to apply the provisions of the fourth Geneva Convention, it had not taken the prompt and effective action required to ensure that due protection was provided to the population of the territories.

(Mr. Khediri, Algeria)

Israel, meanwhile, persisted in policies which were designed to lead to the complete elimination of the Palestinian people. Its arbitrary use of force spared neither children, women nor the elderly, even when they took refuge in hospitals or schools. Other abhorrent practices included collective punishments, the demolition of homes and economic pressure, exerted through increases in taxes, confiscation of property and the uprooting of trees which often constituted a family's only source of livelihood.

22. In such a shameful situation, the Palestinian people must, as a first step, be afforded appropriate protection in order to exercise its legitimate national rights. It would thus be enabled to work peacefully to end the Zionist occupation by convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, with the participation of all parties to the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, on an equal footing.

23. Mr. LLUPA (Albania) said that the report of the Special Committee (A/45/576) was read each year with great concern. Through its resolutions, the General Assembly had repeatedly urged Israel to end its occupation and its repressive practices. Israel continued to ignore such requests, however, and was pursuing its policy of annexation of the occupied territories. The number of human rights violations continued to increase, while living conditions worsened for Palestinian and other Arabs in the occupied territories, and the number of victims of violence grew as well. Palestinians were being driven from their land by force, and Jewish settlers were taking it over, which constituted a colonization process.

24. The intifadah, the expression of the desire of the Palestinian people for its legitimate rights in its native land, was entering its fourth year. The Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, was attempting to find a peaceful solution through political and diplomatic dialogue. It enjoyed the firm support of the Albanian people.

25. His delegation held the view that the United Nations had the responsibility to deal with the problem, and to restore normal living conditions, freedom and human rights in the occupied territories. The solution to the "Palestinian question" was the key to solving the conflicts in the Middle East which, as demonstrated by the current Gulf crisis, were closely linked with global peace and security. The crises and conflicts in that region were extremely complex and intertwined, and the United Nations was the most effective organ to address them.

26. Mr. WAHBI (Saudi Arabia) said that the report of the Special Committee showed that there had been an escalation of arbitrary Israeli crimes and violations of human rights in the occupied territories. Such actions however had failed to dampen the intifadah of a people which believed in its freedom and was impervious to psychological and physical suffering. It was the duty of the United Nations to find a just and lasting settlement to the Palestinian question. Israel had arrogantly disdained all Security Council and General Assembly resolutions urging

(Mr. Wahbi, Saudi Arabia)

it to respect human rights in the occupied territories and not to obstruct the Special Committee, claiming that events in the occupied territories were an internal matter over which the international community had no power.

27. The occupation forces continued to use live ammunition and tear-gas against the Arab inhabitants in a desperate attempt to control the intifadah by force. They had used collective punishments, especially in the past three years, demolished houses, imposed taxes, prevented the export of Palestinian produce and carried out arbitrary arrests in order to demoralize the population and defeat the intifadah. Israel also tried to force the Arab inhabitants to emigrate to make room for the growing numbers of Jewish immigrants, despite repeated Security Council resolutions calling for a halt to such practices and despite the fact that that policy was a flagrant violation of the fourth Geneva Convention. Israel clearly intended to annex the occupied territories and was attempting to change their demographic structure. Israel had interfered with the educational system and syllabuses of schools in the occupied territories in an attempt to obliterate the Palestinian cultural heritage and identity.

28. The Security Council was currently examining the situation of the occupied territories as a result of the previous month's massacre at the Haram al-Sharif in Jerusalem, in which 20 worshippers had been martyred and 150 wounded, a typical example of the barbarity of the occupation forces against helpless Palestinian Arabs. His delegation supported the Special Committee's recommendation of urgent measures which would safeguard the basic human rights of the Palestinian people and compel Israel to apply the fourth Geneva Convention and all pertinent Security Council and General Assembly resolutions. In conclusion, although some described Israel as an "oasis of democracy" in the Middle East, the Special Committee's report demonstrated the true nature of that inhuman democracy.

29. Mr. KADRAT (Iraq) said that the Special Political Committee discussed Israeli practices every year without achieving any tangible results, while the situation in the occupied territories worsened daily and no just and peaceful solution to the Palestinian question was in sight, since Israel continued its policy of aggression, terrorism, violence, murder and eviction against the heroic Palestinian people, in defiance of General Assembly resolutions and 166 Security Council resolutions, in the knowledge that the American veto would prevent the Security Council from taking any practical steps to apply sanctions against Israel. It thus had a free hand to commit its bloody crimes against the Palestinians and acquire nuclear, chemical and biological weapons of mass destruction for use against the Arabs. It also refused to discuss any agreement to make the Middle East a zone free of such weapons.

30. Since 1947 the United Nations had urged the return of Palestinian refugees and the granting of their national rights; however, the Security Council had taken no serious steps to implement its own resolutions. Iraq had always maintained that the lack of security and stability in the Middle East was due to the aggressive and expansionist Zionist policies, Jewish immigration and the preventing of the Palestinian people from exercising its inalienable rights to return, to self-determination and to the establishment of an independent State in Palestine.

(Mr. Kadrat, Iraq)

Israel had refused to co-operate with the Special Committee. The tragic massacres on the Haram al-Sharif had not been spontaneous, but planned by the Zionist authorities: the film recently screened in the Security Council had shown that innocent worshippers had been fired on at close range. Israel had refused to receive the United Nations emissary requested by Security Council resolution 672 (1990). Shamir's statement before that massacre of Israel's ambition to control all of Jerusalem and Judaize its population, together with various statements of Zionist extremists full of hate for the Arabs were proof of Israel's scheme to liquidate and expel the Arabs in order to prevent a peaceful solution of the problem. Shamir had recently told The Washington Post that Israel's former leaders had left them a clear mission to preserve the land of Israel from the Mediterranean to the Jordan River for the generations to come and for mass immigration.

31. The report of the Special Committee (A/45/576) showed that the Israelis had used live ammunition to repress the intifadah; hospitals, schools and universities had been subjected to violence; and high taxes had been imposed to force low-income families to close their businesses and move. Israel confiscated Palestinian agricultural produce and exported it itself. Arabs were prevented from growing fruit trees, and scarce water supplies were cut off. The pumping of ground water in Gaza had made it too saline to drink. Restrictions were placed on the freedoms of religion, movement and education. Schools were closed and syllabuses were imposed. Assault and murder were encouraged against Arab workers.

32. He quoted the conclusion of the report that if urgent measures were not taken, the escalation of tension noted in the occupied territories could lead to a major explosion and that it was therefore necessary to negotiate a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement, taking into account the rights of all peoples in the area including the national rights of the Palestinian people. He said that Israel must recognize the legitimate right of the Palestinian people to return to its land and establish an independent State under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. The international community was urged to apply all Security Council resolutions on the Palestinian question and halt financial assistance to Israel, which encouraged it to commit acts of aggression against the Arabs and build settlements to absorb Jewish immigrants at the expense of the Palestinian people and, ultimately, the Arab land in order to achieve the dream of Israel from the Nile to the Euphrates.

33. Mr. AL-ZAYANI (Bahrain) said that the report of the Special Committee had noted a deterioration of conditions in the occupied territories and an escalation of tension and violence as a result of the oppressive Israeli measures used against Arab civilians. Israel was pursuing its policy of annexation, colonization and settlement of the occupied territories, changing their demographic structure, exploiting their natural resources, linking their economy to that of Israel, subjecting agricultural exports to crippling restrictions and desecration of holy places in violation of numerous Security Council and General Assembly resolutions. The establishment of settlements in the occupied territories violated international conventions such as the Hague Convention of 1907 and the fourth Geneva Convention, as stressed by relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions.

(Mr. Al-Zayani, Bahrain)

Nevertheless, Israel had continued to confiscate land for the purposes of establishing settlements. The report had noted an alarming trend towards the hardening of repression and the worsening of human rights in the occupied territories. The arbitrary repression did not even spare children, and detainees were subjected to psychological pressure and denied the means of legal redress. Other practices included long curfews, collective punishments, conditional banishment, prolonged closure of academic institutions, harassment and physical abuse. Economic, social and sanitary conditions had deteriorated, and the inhabitants suffered from the aggressive behaviour of the settlers. The repugnant crime recently committed at Jerusalem's Haram al-Sharif had shown the world the inhuman conditions under which the Palestinians were living. UNRWA had reported growing violations of its privileges and immunities and difficulty in guaranteeing the safety of its facilities. The suffering of the Palestinian people and the Syrian Arabs in the occupied territories would not end as long as Israeli occupation and colonization remained in force. Human rights and basic freedoms in the occupied territories could only be ensured by an end to the occupation and the attainment by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights. The occupation was in itself a violation of human rights.

34. Mr. EL KHATIB (Morocco) said that the Special Committee had once again presented eloquent testimony to the deterioration of the human rights situation in the territories occupied by Israel, where the situation remained explosive and a threat to international peace and security. There was no doubt that the situation would continue to deteriorate as long as the occupation continued and the Palestinian people had not exercised its right to self-determination and independence.

35. The intifadah, which was now in its third year, had confirmed that the Palestinian people were determined to put an end to the Israeli occupation and win recognition of their national rights. The most recent incident of violence, involving the Al-Aqsa Mosque, had led to Security Council meetings in which an appeal had been made for measures to be taken to protect the Palestinian people. Unfortunately, the United Nations had so far been prevented from adopting the measures required to ensure the security and protection of Palestinians living under the occupation régime.

36. In any case, the perpetuation of the occupation was itself a basic violation of human rights which the occupying authorities seemed to have no intention of ending. On the contrary, the statements as well as the actions of those authorities indicated clearly that they were continuing their long-standing policy of establishing new settlements, imposing hardships on the Palestinian population and expelling many of them. The Special Committee's report provided many examples of the arbitrary measures taken by the occupying authorities to alter the demographic composition, legal status and even geographic characteristics of the occupied territories, in violation of all their obligations under the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the Hague Conventions of 1899, 1907 and 1954. The Golan was also considered an integral part of Israel by the Israeli authorities, and all their actions there confirmed that policy of annexation. They continued to

(Mr. El Khatib, Morocco)

infringe the rights of the population of all the occupied territories, including their rights to freedom of movement, expression and education and even their religious freedom. His delegation was nevertheless convinced that none of those actions could halt the heroic resistance of the Palestinian people. The withdrawal of Israeli forces from all the Arab and Palestinian occupied territories, including the Holy City of Jerusalem, and the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable right to self-determination and independence were the essential preconditions for the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

37. Mr. INBAR (Israel) said that although the report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories (A/45/576) supposedly presented an objective account of the situation in the territories administered by Israel, the very title of the report was an implicit charge against Israel, and the letter of transmittal preceding the report stated that "occupation in itself" was a "violation of basic human rights". One example of the report's inaccuracy was its claim that Israel was deliberately attempting to bring down the level of academic and cultural achievement in the territories in question, whereas all of the institutions of higher education in Judea, Samaria and Gaza had been founded under Israeli administration. Another example of inaccuracy was the statement in the letter of transmittal that "the policy of expelling Palestinians from the occupied territories" had continued to be implemented, whereas the expulsions carried out in August 1989 had been ordered in 1988, and not a single expulsion had taken place during the period covered by the report, from 25 August 1989 to 31 August 1990. Moreover, the report brazenly omitted any mention of acts of terror against Israelis, the killing of Palestinians by other Palestinians, the illegality of the intifadah itself and the duty of the State of Israel to preserve order and security in the territories. The report was based on the testimony of representatives of the PLO and of neighbouring countries such as the Syrian Arab Republic, which had a dubious human rights record, and on that of inhabitants of the territories, including some who had been previously expelled for flagrant acts of terrorism.

38. The report contained information on the measures taken by the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) in the administered areas. With regard to the demolition of houses, the report failed to distinguish between demolition as a punishment and deterrent and demolition for reasons of planning, which were two separate issues. The demolition of a structure as a security measure due to imperative military considerations was permitted under article 53 of the fourth Geneva Convention. Demolition orders were subject to the rulings of the Israeli Supreme Court, which had held in August 1989 that before a demolition order was implemented, the offender must be given the right to petition the Court against the decision. The sole purpose of the measure was to deter potential perpetrators of the most serious crimes. Because it could affect individuals other than the offender concerned, the demolition or sealing of houses was invoked only in grave cases involving murder or attempted murder. Statistics showed that most of those cases had involved the brutal murder of innocent Palestinians accused of collaboration with the Israeli

(Mr. Inbar, Israel)

authorities or of persons who were suspected of behaviour that was objectionable by Palestinian standards.

39. With regard to the rules of engagement on opening fire, the rules were explained to all military units before they embarked on duty in the territories, and soldiers were required to carry a copy of the rules with them. The general criterion for opening fire was the presence of immediate danger to human life; however, opening fire remained the option of last resort. In addition, the rules of engagement did not permit firing into a crowd, and shooting was not used as a riot control method.

40. Under the rules of engagement, soldiers were not allowed to open fire unless they were fired upon, were in the presence of immediate danger to their lives or to the lives of civilians, or were apprehending an escaping suspect or vehicle in cases connected to serious felonies. Despite the difficult situation in the territories, the rules of engagement and other standing orders concerning the conduct of the IDF did not deviate from the Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials adopted at the thirty-fourth session of the General Assembly.

41. The report also contained false allegations with regard to administrative detentions. In reality, no one was arrested for expressing non-violent political views. Persons placed under administrative detention included those who had perpetrated acts of violence and terror or who had played operational roles in the administrative or ideological echelons of groups which perpetrated such acts. Persons who were responsible for the administrative aspects of those groups could not be considered merely political offenders engaging in non-violent political activities.

42. Although the report mentioned expulsion orders, expulsion was not a general policy but a measure of last resort whose implementation was fully in keeping with Israel's responsibilities in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza District. The persons expelled were those who were prominent in instigating and perpetrating violence-related acts. Every individual who received an expulsion order was given the opportunity to submit an appeal. In addition, the Israeli Supreme Court had held that the expulsion of individuals as a security measure was not prohibited under article 49 of the fourth Geneva Convention, which prohibited only mass deportations.

43. On the subject of education, almost all of the regional schools and institutions of higher education in the territories were functioning normally. Since 1967, Israel's policy had always been to encourage normal school activity and to improve the educational system in the territories. Many new institutions of learning had been opened, including five universities. In the previous 23 years, the number of pupils, teachers and classes had more than doubled and the number of schools had risen from 997 to 1,560.

44. However, since December 1987, schools had frequently been used by PLO extremists as centres for organizing and launching violent activity. Such

(Mr. Inbar, Israel)

practices could not be tolerated by any democratic country, so Israel had no choice but to close schools which had ceased to be places of study and had become foci for promoting violence. With the encouragement of the PLO, many children failed to attend classes and threw stones at passing Israeli vehicles. They were even assigned specific disruptive or violent tasks according to their age group. Although the schools had been reopened in mid-1989, individual schools which had reverted to violence had been closed since the commencement of the school year in January 1990. The problem of violence was of much greater severity in the universities, which were exploited as key centres of organized violent activity. The universities and community colleges had been reopened in late 1989. The closure of schools was selective, following disturbances at specific schools and their surroundings.

45. With regard to medical services, hospitals in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza District had continued to function. Since 1967, the introduction of sophisticated medical equipment, the improvement of professional standards of service through training programmes and the expansion of medical facilities had ensured proper medical care for local residents. No one was denied medical care, and any resident of the territories had the option of joining the governmental health insurance programme. The IDF was not allowed to enter hospitals unless serious offenders had taken refuge in a hospital or violence was emanating from hospital premises. Extremists affiliated with the PLO and with Islamic fundamentalist groups were impairing medical services in the territories and exploiting ambulances by using them to transport inciters and rioters.

46. With regard to censorship and the limitation of freedom of speech, nearly all of the newspapers published in the eastern sections of Jerusalem and circulated in the territories had appeared during the period of Israeli administration and were used as organizational and propaganda instruments by Palestinian groups. Many of the journalists who worked for those newspapers were former prisoners, including some who had been incarcerated for terrorist activity. After the outbreak of the intifadah, it had been discovered that those so-called journalists were involved in the illegal transfer of money and the dissemination of inflammatory material, including leaflets calling for the murder of Israeli soldiers and civilians, disturbances of public order, attacks on the local population and against the civil administration, etc. Those responsible for such illegal and dangerous activities had been arrested. Newspaper offices had been searched on the basis of reliable information linking them with illegal activities, which had been corroborated by the discovery of inflammatory material and weapons. However, Israel remained committed to full freedom of the Arab, Israeli and foreign press and allowed full media coverage of the events taking place in the area.

47. The intifadah was not an isolated event in the history of Israel, whose very existence had been continuously threatened since its establishment by the state of war declared by its Arab neighbours, the PLO and extremist Islamic groups. Terrorist attacks in Israel and abroad, on aircraft and on the high seas had claimed thousands of civilian lives. In the current uprising, which was particularly violent, not only Israeli soldiers and civilians but also Arab

(Mr. Inbar, Israel)

residents of the administered areas were under continual assault. Some 350 Arab residents suspected of collaboration with Israel had been brutally murdered, including one the previous day, and thousands had been intimidated or beaten at the direction of the uprising's leadership. Israel's response to the intifadah sought to provide security for Israel's future and safety for its citizens while simultaneously meeting the requirements of international law by maintaining public order in the administered areas. That response had been proportionate to the context and nature of the intifadah; unlike other nations, Israel had not used the death penalty, show trials, lethal gas, mass deportations or forced migration, nor had it slaughtered rioters with automatic weapons or sent tanks into crowds.

48. General Assembly resolution 2443 (XXIII), which had established the Special Committee, had been adopted by a minority of the members of the Assembly, many of which had been governed by totalitarian régimes which tended to condemn first and investigate later. Most of those countries had fortunately experienced a transition to democracy and the rule of law, and if those principles were applied to the United Nations, the long-overdue abolition of the Special Committee would finally come to pass. Moreover, the Special Committee had spent more than $20 million in current values since its inception. At a time when the Organization was facing serious budgetary problems, it would be more fruitful and logical to invest those funds for a better cause, such as UNRWA. Most of the information in the Special Committee's report had been quoted, though in a very selective way, from the Israeli press, including those reports which were critical of the Israeli Government. That information was easily obtainable from the Israeli Government at no charge, and visitors to the territories in question were allowed complete freedom of movement and association. It was time to cease the irresponsible inflammation of passions against Israel so that the people of the Middle East could enjoy lasting peace and prosperity.

49. Mr. IRUMBA (Uganda) said that a larger view of the current tension in the Middle East must include the question of Palestine, which was at the core of the Middle East conflict. No one could deny that since the partition of Palestine, the human rights of the Palestinian people had been flagrantly violated by Israel. The Special Committee had for the past 18 years played a useful role in monitoring those violations, and its latest report was a grim reminder of the continuing Israeli occupation, the agony of the Palestinian people and the dangers and unacceptable consequences of the situation. The Committee's report was all the more commendable because, as in the past, the occupying Power had refused to co-operate with it.

50. His delegation upheld the view, which had several times been confirmed by the General Assembly and the Security Council, that the 1949 Geneva Conventions were applicable to the territories occupied by Israel. Regrettably, Israel had never complied with its obligations under those Conventions, as it had not to date complied with the Security Council resolutions declaring null and void the annexation of Jerusalem and the Golan Heights.

(Mr. Irumba, Uganda)

51. Israel's policy in the West Bank and Gaza had been characterized by repression, the establishment of settlements and, most recently, the encouragement of immigrants from the Soviet Union to settle there. It was clear that Israel's objective was to carry out a de facto annexation.

52. The Arab States and the PLO had made concessions in an effort to respond positively to Israel's legitimate fears. The Palestinians had committed themselves to a negotiated settlement in accordance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the other relevant United Nations resolutions. The international community had welcomed that initiative. Instead of responding positively, however, Israel had made every effort to deny the existence of the Palestinian nation and discredit the PLO and still sought to condemn the Palestinians to the status of a permanently subjugated people.

53. In the present international atmosphere, a number of former foes had sat down to resolve their problems. The question was whether Israel could and would follow suit. It must be made to realize that lasting security for it could be attained only through the negotiating process, which had won wide international support. The Palestinians, through the PLO, must necessarily be involved in such negotiations, and the settlement reached must include the withdrawal of Israel from the occupied Arab territories, the right of the Palestinians to return to their homeland, and the exercise by the Palestinians of their right to self-determination. The United Nations must provide the framework for a just and comprehensive peace, and his delegation fully supported the convening of an International Peace Conference on the Middle East in which the PLO and other parties concerned would participate on an equal footing. As a result of détente, the permanent members of the Security Council had concerted their actions in matters of international peace and security. It was a matter for regret that, with regard to Israel, the Security Council had not acted with equal determination to impose the measures envisaged in the Charter which the situation warranted.

54. Mr. AL-ABBADI (Jordan), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the relations between Jordan and the West Bank had been based on the constitutionally guaranteed equality of rights of all members of the population and that the purpose of Jordan's presence had been to save the occupants of the West Bank from Israeli occupation. The Israeli representative's allegation that there had been no universities or educational institutions in the West Bank before 1967 was a falsehood. Jordan had provided extensive educational facilities to the inhabitants of the West Bank. The heart of the matter was that Israel remained an occupying Power and that the United Nations must take action to put an end to its occupation.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.